



# ***Barkham Parish Council***

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Dear Mr Hall,

**Barkham Parish Council Comments on Planning Applications  
F/2015/0001 Application for 1500 place secondary school**

## **Barkham Parish Council Position Statement**

**Barkham Parish Council (BPC) supports the proposal to build a secondary school, within Barkham on a site in the SDL. A school serving the southern part of the Borough is much needed and we are delighted that it will actually be in our parish.**

**We do have, however, a number of observations that need to be considered by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).**

## **Name of School**

Barkham Parish Council enthusiasm is tempered by the suggestion that this school is referred to as “Wokingham Arborfield Secondary School”. The school plainly sits entirely within the parish of Barkham. In due course, it is assumed that the development will have a new, non military name, but in the meantime the name should include “Barkham” rather than “Arborfield”. Failing that, Wokingham South would be a more appropriate working name, especially as the school is intended to serve communities across the whole of the south of the Borough.

This is a school, so let’s start by getting our geography right!

## **Sustainable Design and Renewable Energy**

MDD Policy CC04 and CC05 refer. See also para 2.23 which refers to passive solar design.

In view of these policies, BPC would like to know if consideration has been given to maximising the sustainability of the school, especially in terms of energy performance. Some simple adaptations could help to make the new school a cutting edge example of sustainable design.

Turning the whole building through 90 degrees clockwise would maximise sustainability. It is laid out in an E-shaped configuration with the main axis north-south and the three main teaching blocks running east-west. This means that without a lot of heating and ventilation, half the class rooms in these blocks facing south will be exposed to the full glare of sunlight. The other half will be chilly north facing rooms. If the axis was turned east-west (as an m-shape) then all classrooms benefit either from morning or afternoon sun.

BPC would like to know whether this has been considered and why it has been decided to use proposed orientation?

Reference is made to solar panels, but as far as can be detected, the opportunity has not been taken to maximise the solar potential. With a large amount of flat roof, there is an opportunity to generate considerably more

electricity. The example of the new Blackfriars station would be a good model to consider, where the whole roof comprises solar panels arranged in such a way as to create an interesting architectural feature, rather than just being added as an afterthought.

### **Access**

Access arrangements for the school are unsatisfactory, This will be the case especially during the early years, before the road system and the greenway network within and around the SDL are fully developed.

### **Road Access**

Road access will be exclusively via Princess Marina Drive. In the early years it has to be assumed that the majority of pupils will arrive by road, as the school will be remote from existing housing areas.

It would certainly be sensible if a location for a drop off point can be situated adjacent to Park Lane. Travel Plan 5.3.2 suggests the possibility of a drop off point adjacent to Hogwood Lane: this could be a solution but it has to be considered whether this is genuinely practical within an industrial area. It has to be borne in mind that a drop off point also implies pick up later in the day, which will result in a certain amount of short term parking. Therefore the location requires adequate space to avoid conflicts between school traffic and HGV movements. This needs to be thought through carefully.

### **Public Transport**

The No 3 Leopard Bus covers a lot of the anticipated catchment area as it winds its way through Barkham, Finchampstead and Arborfield. An increased frequency on the Wokingham leg at least in the morning and evening periods would encourage greater patronage by pupils. This opportunity should be discussed with Reading buses.

The nearest bus stops are currently at the Sheerlands Road/Baird Road junction and also in Park Road near Hogwood Lane for Wokingham buses only. Reading Buses should be encouraged to bring the bus route closer to the school along the currently restricted section of Princess Marina Drive. Buses could then turn right, emerging on to Sheerlands Road at one of the currently disused gates. This would also avoid the need for buses to carry out a three point turn at Sheerlands Road. Such a solution would be safer, more convenient and probably would not increase the elapsed time of the bus route.

In the longer term, it is assumed that new bus routes will be implemented, once the Nine Mile Extension and other road improvements are completed.

### **Greenways**

To enable safe access to schools, greenways will be required that are off road and have hard all weather surfaces. Any proposal (as indicated in the Travel Plan 2.2.9) that suggests using existing roads such as Commonfield Lane, Barkham Street and Barkham Ride are totally unrealistic. These roads are narrow, already congested and are far too dangerous to permit cycling by children.

The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Group has devoted considerable effort to examining proper cycle routes. A copy of the draft report is attached. Section 10 highlights some priorities which relate to the SDL.

A number of cycleways are required, primarily to provide safe routes to school.

- SDL-Arborfield Cross
- SDL-Shinfield via relief road
- SDL-Barkham via Commonfield Lane, BA11, BA10
- SDL- Barkham Ride via BA14
- SDL-Finchampstead via Nine Mile Ride

Specifically the following cycleways improvements are required within Barkham:

- A link route from the school to Commonfield Lane could be provided across land which will ultimately be part of the SANG. It will be necessary to provide safe crossing points on Biggs Lane and Commonfield Lane.
- Further continuation of a cycleway adjacent to Commonfield Lane should be provided, with a safe crossing of Barkham Ride, leading to bridleway BA11.
- BA11 and BA10 should then be upgraded to create a cycleway through to Barkham Hill.
- The route using bridleway BA14 from Commonfield Lane to Barkham Ride is an opportunity that could be made ready fairly quickly as it is an existing RoW that needs resurfacing to bring it up to all weather cycling standard..

Implementation of these routes should be carried out in conjunction with the SDL development plans.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Neuhofer  
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council